

# First Ladies NHS and James A. Garfield NHS News Release



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## National Park Service Gears Up For Centennial Challenge Projects

**Brecksville, Ohio** - First Ladies National Historic Site (FLNHS) and James A. Garfield National Historic Site (JAGNHS) will benefit from among the national proposals National Park Service Director Mary Bomar and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced at a press conference in Yosemite National Park today to celebrate the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the NPS.

“The National Park Service has, after a rigorous review, certified proposals as eligible for centennial challenge matching funds,” Bomar said. “And they are ready to go in Fiscal Year 2008 which begins Oct. 1.”

Among the \$370 million of proposals eligible for centennial challenge matching funds are several cross- cutting projects that affect multiple parks including a national incentive to boost the Junior Ranger program and to increase the research in the “All Taxa” inventories, an ecosystem- wide look at species existence.

Director Bomar said, “The centennial challenge is a critical element in the National Park Centennial Initiative put forward by President Bush and unveiled by Secretary Kempthorne one year ago. The full centennial initiative is a potential \$3 billion investment in our national parks, two thirds of it a public- private partnership of matching money.”

“The President’s Fiscal Year 2008 budget called for an additional \$100 million a year for 10 years to be dedicated to bolster basic park operations,” Bomar said. “Congress has included the first \$100 million for operations in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget that awaits final passage.”

Locally, Site Manager Carol J. Spears said “The budget proposal includes \$50,000 in funding for the creation of a new, permanent position, Museum Technician, at the JAGNHS. The Museum Technician would provide much- needed curatorial management of the museum collections. The collections include the irreplaceable original items of President Garfield and his family, owned by the park’s partner, the Western Reserve Historical Society. At FLNHS the proposed \$20,000 budget increase includes the funding of two seasonal positions to assist the National First Ladies’ Library to educate park visitors about the significant impact First Ladies have had on our country’s history.”

“The second part of the initiative is the centennial challenge – a funding mechanism to match up to \$100 million a year over 10 years of public money with \$100 million a year for 10 years in private donations,” Bomar said. “Congress has yet to finish legislation necessary to create the public- private centennial challenge.”

Financial commitments to the first round of proposals exceeded the President's challenge. "We have about \$370 million in proposals with not \$100 million in private commitments but \$215 million committed from park visitors, friends groups and other partners," Bomar said.

"I've testified before Senate and House subcommittees and judging by the warm reception we received, I believe Congress will include centennial challenge money in our next budget," Bomar said. "We look forward to working with members from both sides of the aisle to provide the key to the centennial challenge. When that happens we can make decisions on which of these wonderful proposals to begin in the fall."

Site Manager Spears said, "The NPS Director is committed to assuring that each unit of the National Park System will be funded for at least one project from the Centennial Challenge matching funds over the next 10 years. Both FLNHS and JAGNHS have strong operating partners that support the matching funds challenge. We have a great opportunity to reach toward these matching funds for Canton and Mentor in FY09."

"These two historic sites have a Centennial vision, and a strategy to implement that vision," said Spears. "At First Ladies the vision includes opportunities to strengthen the partnership with the National First Ladies' Library, increase educational impact and outreach about the site, and assist cultural preservation of the collections. At Garfield, the Centennial Initiative vision includes establishing the park as a vibrant participant in the lives and activities of the local community, generating a broad base of public support and commitment to the park, and implementing cultural preservation of the collections and cultural landscape."

To be certified, proposals had to address at least one of the five over-arching centennial goals. They also had to be imaginative and innovative, address critical Service needs, have a philanthropic partner, require little or no additional recurring operating funds to be sustainable, improve the efficiency of park management, operations and employees and produce measurable results. The full list of centennial challenge-eligible proposals is available on-line at [www.nps.gov/2016](http://www.nps.gov/2016).

"There is a huge wave of excitement among National Park Service professionals and our partners," Bomar said. "We will create park-based centers for Junior Rangers, implement cutting-edge energy projects like fuel cells and geothermal and build multimedia wayside exhibits that "talk" to visitors. This is a victory for national parks and over 270 million park visitors we see each year."

"Last week, I sent an email to the men and women of the National Park Service to inform them of our announcement. One of the replies I received says it best: 'This is thrilling! A win/win opportunity like we've never seen before. Thanks for the energy and vision for the NPS.'

"That thanks is for the many who worked to transform vision into action: Secretary Kempthorne and our friends in Congress, from both sides of the aisle who introduced legislation to support the Centennial. But most of all, our thanks go to park superintendents, friends groups, partners and an army of supporters."

"When history is written," Bomar said, "the Centennial Initiative will be second only to the creation of the National Park System itself."

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